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| APPLICATION NO. | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO. |
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| 09/718,924 | 11/22/2000 | Timothy Roy Block | ROC9-2000-0123-US1 | 2147 |
| 46296 | 7590 | 05/03/2006 | EXAMINER | |
| MARTIN & ASSOCIATES, LLC P.O. BOX 548 CARTHAGE, MO 64836-0548 | | | REILLY, SEAN M | |
| | | | ART UNIT | PAPER NUMBER |
| | | | 2153 | |

DATE MAILED: 05/03/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

| | | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|--|---------------------|--|
| Office Action Summary | Application No. | | Applicant(s) | |
| | 09/718,924 | | BLOCK, TIMOTHY ROY | |
| | Examiner | | Art Unit | |
| | Sean Reilly | | 2153 | |

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 13 February 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-9, 12, 13, 15-17, 19 and 21-24 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 4 and 5 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 6-9, 12, 13, 15-17 and 19 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 2, 3 and 21-24 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

This Office action in response to Applicant's amendment and request for continued examination filed on February 13, 2006. Claims 1-3, 4-9, 12-13, 15-17, 19, and 21-24 are presented for examination. All independent claims have been amended.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

1. Applicant's amendments to independent claim 9 have limited the claims to signal bearing media comprising "recordable type media" as defined in Applicant's specification on pg 13. Accordingly the previous 101 rejection is withdrawn.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. **Claims 1, 6-9, 12-13, 15-17, and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hamilton et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,392,993, hereinafter "Hamilton") and IBM Technical Disclosure Bulletin (June 1996, volume 39, issue number 6, pgs 63-68; hereinafter IBM) and Novaes et al. (U.S. Patent Number 6,973,473; hereinafter Novaes).**

In considering claim 1, Hamilton discloses an apparatus comprising:

At least one processor (inherent), a memory coupled to the at least one processor (inherent), and a network interface (inherent) that couples the apparatus to a plurality of other computer systems (col. 27, line 33-40, "sending system 196"), wherein the apparatus and the plurality of other computer systems form a distributed network of computers that cooperate via ordered messages to perform a task (col. 5, lines 55-60, "the invention may also be practiced in distributed computing environments where tasks are performed by remote processing devices that are linked through a communications network"; col. 27, lines 53-54, describing that each message (the messages in Hamilton are actually portions of messages, called "packets") has "sequence numbers"); and

A distributed network communication mechanism residing in the memory and executed by the at least one processor (inherent to allow the master to communicate with the other computer systems in the group), the distributed network communication mechanism including a sliding send window that communicates at least one ordered message to a plurality of the other computer systems without waiting for an acknowledge message from any of the plurality of other computer systems before sending out the next ordered message (col. 27, lines 51-65, describing that a group of messages within a window size are sent to the recipients before an acknowledgment for the group is received);

Hamilton disclosed the invention substantially as claimed however, Hamilton failed to specifically recite 1) the distributed network of computers is a cluster of computers and 2) the distributed communication mechanism enforces execution order of a plurality of received messages to perform the task.

With regard to point 1, Hamilton failed to specifically recite that the distributed network of computers is a cluster of computers. Nonetheless Hamilton did recite that “the invention may also be practiced in distributed computing environments where tasks are performed by remote processing devices that are linked through a communications network” (See Hamilton col 5, lines 55-60). Accordingly Hamilton’s system can be applied to any known distributed computing environment. As evidenced by at least Novaes, clusters are a type of distributed computing environment (see inter alia Col 1, lines 41-61, “distributed computing environment” lines 42-43 and “a distributed system that has the capability of sharing resources is referred to as a cluster” lines 53-54). Thus, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to utilize Hamilton’s system in a cluster computing environment since Hamilton disclosed his system can be utilized in any distributed computing environment and as evidenced by at least Novaes clusters are a type of distributed computing environment. Furthermore clusters provide increased efficiency in processing tasks since tasks are processed in parallel.

With regard to point 2, Hamilton also failed to specifically recite that the distributed communication mechanism enforces execution order of a plurality of received messages to perform the task. Nonetheless it was widely known in distributed computing systems to enforce an execution order of a plurality of received messages to perform a task, as evidenced by IBM. In an analogous distributed processing environment, IBM disclosed a distributed processing system that enforces the execution order of messages to perform a task (e.g. task ordering to meet task ordering constraints, see inter alia pgs 1-2). IBM enforces the execution order of messages to perform a task since each subtask needed to complete an overall task may require

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data from a previous subtask (See for instance the software build example on pgs 4 and 5). IBM refers to this as a task ordering constraint or data dependency. By ensuring the order constraints or data dependency of each subtask is met, IBM ensures that the overall task is able to complete. Thus, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify Hamilton's system to enforce an execution order of a plurality of received messages to perform a task, as disclosed by IBM, in order to ensure that all the subtasks needed to complete a task have all the necessary data they need at time of their execution, this will ensure that each subtask is able to complete successfully and thereby complete the overall task.

In considering claim 6, Hamilton discloses a computer-implemented method for processing a task in a clustered computing environment, the method comprising the steps of:

Providing a distributed network communication mechanism executing on a first computer system in a distributed network wherein the computers in the distributed network cooperate via ordered messages to perform the task and wherein the cluster communications mechanism includes a sliding send window that communicates at least one ordered message to a plurality of other computer systems in the cluster without waiting for an acknowledgment from each computer system in the distributed network that received an ordered message before sending out the next ordered message (col. 5, lines 55-60, "the invention may also be practiced in distributed computing environments where tasks are performed by remote processing devices that are linked through a communications network"; col. 27, lines 53-54, describing that each message (the messages in Hamilton are actually portions of messages, called "packets") has "sequence numbers");

The cluster communication mechanism sending a first ordered message to a first plurality of other computer systems in the cluster; and

The cluster communication mechanism sending a second ordered message to a second plurality of other computer systems in the cluster without waiting for a response to the first ordered messages from each of the first plurality of other computer systems in the cluster (col. 27, lines 51-65, describing that a group of messages within a window size are sent to the recipients before an acknowledgment for the group is received).

Hamilton disclosed the invention substantially as claimed however, Hamilton failed to specifically recite 1) the distributed network of computers is a cluster of computers and 2) the distributed communication mechanism enforces execution order of a plurality of received messages to perform the task.

With regard to point 1, Hamilton failed to specifically recite that the distributed network of computers is a cluster of computers. Nonetheless Hamilton did recite that “the invention may also be practiced in distributed computing environments where tasks are performed by remote processing devices that are linked through a communications network” (See Hamilton col 5, lines 55-60). Accordingly Hamilton’s system can be applied to any known distributed computing environment. As evidenced by at least Novaes, clusters are a distributed computing environment (see inter alia Col 1, lines 41-61, “distributed computing environment” lines 42-43 and “a distributed system that has the capability of sharing resources is referred to as a cluster” lines 53-54). Thus, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to utilize Hamilton’s system in a cluster computing environment since Hamilton disclosed his system can be utilized in any distributed computing environment and as evidenced

by at least Novaes clusters are a distributed computing environment. Furthermore clusters provide increased efficiency in processing tasks since tasks are processed in parallel.

With regard to point 2, Hamilton also failed to specifically recite that the distributed communication mechanism enforces execution order of a plurality of received messages to perform the task. Nonetheless it was widely known in distributed computing systems to enforce an execution order of a plurality of received messages to perform a task, as evidenced by IBM. In an analogous distributed processing environment, IBM disclosed a distributed processing system that enforces the execution order of messages to perform a task (e.g. task ordering to meet task ordering constraints, see inter alia pgs 1-2). IBM enforces the execution order of messages to perform a task since each subtask needed to complete an overall task may require data from a previous subtask (See for instance the software build example on pgs 4 and 5). IBM refers to this as a task ordering constraint or data dependency. By ensuring the order constraints or data dependency of each subtask is met, IBM ensures that the overall task is able to complete. Thus, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify Hamilton's system to enforce an execution order of a plurality of received messages to perform a task, as disclosed by IBM, in order to ensure that all the subtasks needed to complete a task have all the necessary data they need at time of their execution, this will ensure that each subtask is able to complete successfully and thereby complete the overall task.

In considering claim 7, Hamilton further discloses that at least one of the first plurality of other computer system in the cluster responds to the first and second ordered messages by sending a single acknowledge message to the cluster communication mechanism that

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acknowledges both the first and second ordered messages (col. 27, lines 54-65, “ACK request flag is set on every Nth packet... [which] lets sending system 196 know with certainty that all of the packets of the ACK window were received”).

In considering claim 8, Hamilton further discloses that the first and second ordered messages each include a header with information (i.e. no “ACK request flag”) that indicates whether an acknowledge messages for the first and second ordered messages may be delayed and grouped with at least one subsequent acknowledge message (col. 27, lines 54-65, “ACK request flag is set on every Nth packet... [which] lets sending system 196 know with certainty that all of the packets of the ACK window were received”).

In considering claim 9, Hamilton discloses a program product comprising a computer program comprising:

A cluster communication mechanism that includes a sliding send window that communicates at least one ordered message to a plurality of other computer systems in a distributed network system that cooperate via ordered messages to perform a task without waiting for an acknowledge message from any of the plurality of other computer systems before sending out the next ordered message (col. 5, lines 55-60, “the invention may also be practiced in distributed computing environments where tasks are performed by remote processing devices that are linked through a communications network”; col. 27, lines 53-54, describing that each message (the messages in Hamilton are actually portions of messages, called “packets”) has “sequence numbers”; col. 27, lines 54-65, “ACK request flag is set on every Nth packet...”

[which] lets sending system 196 know with certainty that all of the packets of the ACK window were received”);

Hamilton disclosed the invention substantially as claimed however, Hamilton failed to specifically recite 1) the distributed network of computers is a cluster of computers and 2) the distributed communication mechanism enforces execution order of a plurality of received messages to perform the task.

With regard to point 1, Hamilton failed to specifically recite that the distributed network of computers is a cluster of computers. Nonetheless Hamilton did recite that “the invention may also be practiced in distributed computing environments where tasks are performed by remote processing devices that are linked through a communications network” (See Hamilton col 5, lines 55-60). Accordingly Hamilton’s system can be applied to any known distributed computing environment. As evidenced by at least Novaes, clusters are a distributed computing environment (see inter alia Col 1, lines 41-61, “distributed computing environment” lines 42-43 and “a distributed system that has the capability of sharing resources is referred to as a cluster” lines 53-54). Thus, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to utilize Hamilton’s system in a cluster computing environment since Hamilton disclosed his system can be utilized in any distributed computing environment and as evidenced by at least Novaes clusters are a distributed computing environment. Furthermore clusters provide increased efficiency in processing tasks since tasks are processed in parallel.

With regard to point 2, Hamilton also failed to specifically recite that the distributed communication mechanism enforces execution order of a plurality of received messages to perform the task. Nonetheless it was widely known in distributed computing systems to enforce

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an execution order of a plurality of received messages to perform a task, as evidenced by IBM.

In an analogous distributed processing environment, IBM disclosed a distributed processing system that enforces the execution order of messages to perform a task (e.g. task ordering to meet task ordering constraints, see inter alia pgs 1-2). IBM enforces the execution order of messages to perform a task since each subtask needed to complete an overall task may require data from a previous subtask (See for instance the software build example on pgs 4 and 5). IBM refers to this as a task ordering constraint or data dependency. By ensuring the order constraints or data dependency of each subtask is met, IBM ensures that the overall task is able to complete. Thus, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify Hamilton's system to enforce an execution order of a plurality of received messages to perform a task, as disclosed by IBM, in order to ensure that all the subtasks needed to complete a task have all the necessary data they need at time of their execution, this will ensure that each subtask is able to complete successfully and thereby complete the overall task.

In considering claim 12, Hamilton further discloses that the first and second ordered messages each include a header with information (i.e. no "ACK request flag") that indicates whether an acknowledge messages for the first and second ordered messages may be delayed and grouped with at least one subsequent acknowledge message (col. 27, lines 54-65, "ACK request flag is set on every Nth packet... [which] lets sending system 196 know with certainty that all of the packets of the ACK window were received").

In considering claims 13, 17, and 19, Hamilton further discloses that the ordered message is communicated to the plurality of other computer systems via IP multicast ("IP multicast," col. 12, lines 41-42).

In considering claim 15, Hamilton further discloses that the first plurality of computers includes all computers systems in the second plurality of computers systems (the multicast messages are sent to the same multicast group of recipients).

In considering claim 16, Hamilton further discloses that the first plurality of computer systems comprises the second plurality of computer systems (the multicast messages are sent to the same multicast group of recipients).

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 2-3 and 21-24 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 4-5 are allowed.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments are moot in view of the new grounds of rejection set forth.

Conclusion


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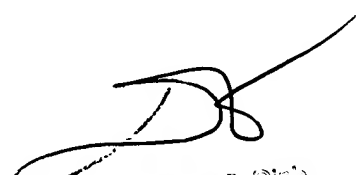
12. The prior art made of record, in PTO-892 form, and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Sean Reilly whose telephone number is 571-272-4228. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8-5.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Glen Burgess can be reached on 571-272-3949. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

 April 25, 2006


Sean Reilly
Patent Examiner